The Ambiyaa عليهم السلام were Protected against Kufr and Shirk from the Beginning and the Meaning of Hadhrat Ibraheem υ saying, "That is my Rabb"

Question: Were the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام believers in the Oneness of Allaah from the beginning or did they believe only after seeing the signs of Allaah's oneness? What is the belief of the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah in this regard? Please explain.

Furthermore, some people look at Hadhrat Ibraheem υ's statement "This is my Rabb" to deduce that (Allaah forbid!) Hadhrat Ibraheem υ was not a believer in Allaah's Oneness from the beginning. We therefore need clarification on this as well.

Answer: All the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام were believers in the Oneness of Allaah from the beginning. Before and after announcing their Nabuwwaat, they had been protected against not only Kufr and Shirk but even everything associated with it. In another part of *Fataawaa Raheemiyyah*, I have stated that Kufr is the antithesis of Nubuwwah. Both cannot co-exist in the same person. Therefore, anyone who is a Nabi υcannot be a Kaafir at all. This is the belief of the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah as stated in their books.

It is stated in *Sharhu Fiqhil Akbar*[1]: "The Ambiyaa عليهم السلام were free from minor sins, major sins, kufr and all evils both before and after announcing their Nabuwwaat. The same appears in *Sharhu Aqaa'id Nasafi*[2].

Aqaa'idul Islaam[3] states: "The Ambiyaa عليهم السلام were all righteous people and free from minor and major sins. This means that after they started receiving revelation, all the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام had been protected against kufr, Shirk and all types of sins, regardless of whether these were done intentionally or not … as for kufr and Shirk, all are unanimous about the fact that the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام were protected against it both before and after announcing their Nabuwwaat.

In his *Aqaa'idul Islaam*[4], Hadhrat Moulana Idrees Kandhalwi رحمه الله states: "The Fourth Belief: All the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام were the chosen servants of Allaah and free from all minor and major sins. Believing in their innocence and purity is part of Imaan. Had they not been such, Allaah would never have given the blanket command to follow them, would never have stated that obeying them is really obeying Him and would never have instructed people to pledge allegiance at their hands. Allaah says in the Qur'aan: ***"Whoever obeys the Rasool ρ really obeys Allaah"*** and ***"Verily those who pledge allegiance to you** (O Rasulullaah ρ) **are actually pledging allegiance to Allaah. Allaah hands is above theirs."***

Innocent (protected against sin) can only be those people whom Allaah has selected and whom He has chosen in terms of their character, habits, deeds and every facet of life. They are pure internally and their hearts are pure from every type of evil instinct, whether from their Nafs or from Shaytaan. This has to be because Allaah has declared in the Qur'aan that the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام are His selected best and selected servants. This means that the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام were Allaah's selected few in every aspect of their lives and He was pleased with them in every facet. They were totally pure in every facet of their lives. Allaah's selected few can only be such when they

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[1] Pgs. 16,17.
[2] Pg. 98.
[3] Pgs. 38,39.
[4] (Vol.1 Pg.45,46).

are free from evil instincts of the Nafs and Shaytaan in every conceivable manner. This quality of inherent innocence and complete purity is referred to as *Asmat* (innocence)."

In his book *Ilmul Kalaam*[5] Hadhrat Moulana Idrees Kandhalwi رحمه الله writes: "Imaan and Islaam are filled into their hearts to such a degree that there is no room for even an indivisible iota of kufr or deceit to enter."

The above extracts make it clear that the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام were protected against kufr and Shirk from the beginning, which is the belief of the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah. It was from the realm of souls (*Aalam Arwaah*) that Allaah took a pledge from the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام to call p towards Towheed. Allaah says in the Qur'aan: **"***(Call to mind the time)* ***When We took the pledge from the Ambiyaa; from you*** *(O Muhammad ε)****, Nooh υ, Ibraheem υ, Moosa υ and Isa υ the son of Maryam*** *(all the Ambiyaa pledged to worship only Allaah and to pass Allaah's message on to the people)****. We took a solemn pledge from them all so that*** *(on the Day of Qiyaamah)* ***He may ask the truthful ones*** *(the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام)* ***about their truthfulness*** *(about whether they fulfilled their pledges. Their confirmation that they fulfilled the pledge will be evidence against the Kuffaar)****. Allaah has prepared a painful doom for the Kaafiroon."***[6]

The verses state the pledge that Allaah took from all the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام before coming into this world, but states the names of the more renowned Ambiyaa عليهم السلام, amongst whom is Hadhrat Ibraheem υ. Now is it at all possible that the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام can be guilty of something that Allaah took a solemn promise from them not to do? It is therefore impossible for the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام not to believe in Towheed.

In the light of this verse, it can be said without reservation that the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام were believers in the Oneness of Allaah from the time they were created and were never guilty of Kufr and Shirk. In fact, they were sent into this world for the express purpose of calling people towards Towheed and worshipping Allaah.

As far as Hadhrat Ibraheem υ, he was amongst the prominent and "resolute" Ambiyaa عليهم السلام (as stated in the Qur'aan). Allaah says about him, ***"Verily We guided Ibraheem υ from before and We had always been aware of all his affairs."*** Allaah also says about him, ***"When he came to his Rabb with a sound heart"*****.** The lowest status of a person with a sound heart is that he be free from Kufr and Shirk.

The debated verse stated in the question is not intended in the literal sense. (Allaah forbid!) Hadhrat Ibraheem υ did not mean that any of the creation was really his Rabb. Ulema have stated several explanations of this verse. Some say that the statement "This is my Rabb" is really a question meaning, "Is this my Rabb?". Other says that his tone was one of scoffing at the beliefs of the people, while others say that Hadhrat Ibraheem υ was telling the people that according to you people, **"This is my Rabb"** whereas you will soon see that when the stars set, they will be no more. When they did see it set, he said to them, **"I do not like those who set (and disappear)"**[7], whereas that Allaah Who never disappears is the Greatest and is deserving of love and reverence.

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[5] Pg. 201.
[6] Surah Ahzaab, verses 7,8.
[7] Surah An'aam, verse 76.

It is an effective manner of debating to first state the standpoint of the adversary and then move on to disprove it. In this way, the opposition quickly retract their stance. This was therefore the reason for Hadhrat Ibraheem υ making the statement **"This is my Rabb"**. He then refuted the belief by saying, **"I do not like those who set"**.

Hadhrat Ibraheem υ then said the same about the moon and the stars, after which he boldly stated, **"I am innocent of ascribing partners to Allaah as you do"**[8]. This makes it clear that it was the people who committed Shirk and Hadhrat Ibraheem υ was innocent of it all.

Just before relating this incident, the Qur'aan mentions how Hadhrat Ibraheem υ refuted the people's idol worship. The verse states: **"***(Keep in mind the time)* ***When Ibraheem υ told his father Aazar, "Do you take idols*** *(which you yourself make)* ***as your gods? I see that you and your people are certainly in manifest error."***[9] This verse also makes it clear that Hadhrat Ibraheem υ never meant that the stars or the others were his Rabb when he said **"This is my Rabb"**. More details of this can be found in the Tafseer of Imaam Raazi (Vol.4 Pg.111-112), *Tafseer Ruhul Ma'aani* (Vol.7 Pg.198) and *Tafseer Mahaa'imi* (Vol.1 Pg.225).

Bayaanul Qur'aan mentions the following: "From the time he had any senses, Hadhrat Ibraheem υ was convinced of Towheed … Then when night closed in over everything and he saw a star shining, he addressed his people saying, 'According to what you say, this is my (and your) Rabb and has control over my affairs. You will however see the reality of things in a short while.' Then when the star set, he said, 'I do not like those who set.' … The gist of it all is that I cannot accept this to be my Rabb. It was the same night or another night that he saw the moon come out shining. Just as before, he addressed his people saying, 'According to what you say, this is my (and your) Rabb and has control over my affairs. You will however see the reality of things in a short while.' Then when the moon set, he said, 'If my Rabb does not guide me (as he has done up to now), then I would be amongst the misguided ones (like you) … Then when the sun rose, he again addressed his people saying, 'According to what you say, this is my (and your) Rabb, has control over my affairs and is the greatest of them all.' This was the end of the debate because if it is proven that the sun is not the Rabb, all the others will automatically lose any status of being the Rabb. Eventually when the sun set, Hadhrat Ibraheem υ said, 'Undoubtedly, I am innocent of the Shirk you commit (as my belief has always been).'"[10]

Tafseer *Ma'aariful Qur'aan* says the following: "***When the night fell over him and he saw a star, he said, 'This is my Rabb'*** Here Hadhrat Ibraheem υ was telling them that according to their beliefs, the star was his as well as their Rabb. The reality was however to dawn in a while so when the star set, Hadhrat Ibraheem υ had the opportunity to say, **"I do not like those who set"**, whereas anyone worthy of being a Rabb has to be loved and revered … When he then saw the moon shining on another night, he again adopted the same argument with the people and told them that according to their beliefs, the moon was his as well as their Rabb. However, when the moon set, he said, 'If my Rabb does not guide me, then I would be amongst the misguided ones, like you people who still believe that it is your deity. The changing conditions of rising and setting that affects this tells me that this

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[8] Surah An'aam, verse 78.
[9] Surah An'aam, verse 74.
[10] Vol.3 Pg.109.

cannot be a deity.' In this verse, Hadhrat Ibraheem υ is also alluding to the fact that his Rabb is indeed someone else, who is guiding him.

When the sun rose, Hadhrat Ibraheem υ again told them that according to their beliefs, the star was his as well as their Rabb and definitely the greatest of the lot. The reality was however to dawn in a while, so when the sun set, his ultimate proof had arrived and he boldly told them, "I am innocent of ascribing partners to Allaah as you do" …[11]

Allaama Abu Muhammad Abdul Haqq Haqqaani رحمه الله has mentioned in his famous book *Aqaa'idul Islaam*[12]: "Hadhrat Ibraheem υ did not say "This is my Rabb" because he believed it, but to scoff at the belief of the Mushrikeen, as Allaah says, ***"Verily We guided Ibraheem υ from before…"*** This guidance from Allaah negates the notion that Hadhrat Ibraheem υ could have ever regarded the sun to be his Rabb."

All the above references clearly explain the meaning of the statement "This is my Rabb". It is therefore wrong to object to the statement. Hadhrat Ibraheem υ was a believer in the Oneness of Allaah from the beginning and there is absolutely no room for any doubts in the matter. And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

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[11] Vol.3 Pgs. 381-383.
[12] Pg. 40.